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Letter dated 21 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With regard to the open debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Balkans to be held on Friday, 23 June 2000, I have the honour to transmit herewith a non-paper entitled "Montenegro and the Balkan crisis", prepared by the Government of the Republic of Montenegro (see annex).

The Head of the Mission of Montenegro in New York (Liaison Officer to the United Nations), Mr. Željko Perović, asked me to help with the circulation of the non-paper. I believe that the document could usefully contribute to the understanding of the situation in the Balkans by the general membership of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Ernest **Petrič**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Montenegro and Balkan crisis

Non-paper

1. The crisis in ex-Yugoslavia is the consequence of a serious delay of profound democratic and economic reforms in the country, on the one hand, and an absence of proper mechanisms for resolving any major systemic crisis on the other. The response to emerging conflicts was the Great-State nationalistic projects, which caused enormous suffering for all the people of the country, and had prolonged negative implications for the entire region, Europe and the international community as a whole.

2. Montenegro has gathered all of its strength and determination to confront that policy and to win the majority support in democratic elections. Montenegro has committed itself to democracy, the rule of law, ethnic and religious tolerance, cooperation with the international community and integration into regional processes and institutions.

3. However, the policy of destruction, autocracy, confrontation with the international community and self-isolation of the Beograd leadership is not reconcilable with the democratic choice of the citizens of Montenegro. It is using all methods in its futile efforts to destablilize Montenegro and undermine its choice. For that purpose, it has been using the Yugoslav Army, whose leaders, in good numbers, are ready to serve in achieving such a policy. Such a policy means that not only Montenegro but this region and the entire international community are faced with the dangerous possibility of a new crisis breaking out. These warnings must be taken seriously now, and we must find an appropriate way to deal with them.

4. Whatever methods the Serbian leadership employs and whatever its aims, Montenegro is persistent in its course, thanks to the support of a great number of its citizens, which is increasing every day, as well as the widest support of the international community, in particular the United States of America and the European Union, and all Montenegro's neighbours, with whom it has extensive cooperation thanks to the possibilities offered by the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. And Montenegro remains committed and open to cooperation with Serbia. In that respect, in the middle of August 1999, it offered Serbia a basis for new relations on terms of full equality of our two states, our two peoples and citizens. Thus, in spite of everything, Montenegro has expressed the interest to create, together with Serbia, a common framework which would be the most appropriate for the citizens of our two countries, and to their benefit as well.

5. The Government and leadership of Montenegro consider that the peace, stability and prosperity of the former Yugoslavia and Balkan area depend on the following prerequisites:

(a) Establishing new democratic relations in Serbia as soon as possible, by organizing free and fair elections, at the municipal level as well as for Serbia, verified by international organizations, with election conditions to be agreed on and accepted by all;

(b) The international community needs to be united in its intention to achieve this goal as soon as possible; therefore, the political-diplomatic isolation of the current policy and regime in Serbia should be strengthened. The international community needs to offer even stronger support to broad democratic forces in Serbia;

(c) It is necessary for the Security Council to create prerequisites for broad and efficient international community support to Montenegro in its commitment to persist in its democratic course, its determination for substantial transformation of the economy and integration in all European and international processes. Montenegro should be offered every opportunity to gain access to international political and financial institutions in order to realize positive transformations without obstacles. Thus, it may represent a positive model for democratic efforts and forces in Serbia, and once the conditions are created may come to an agreement with democratic Serbia on the form and content of future relations that will be most appropriate for the people of these two countries, for peace, stability and prosperity of the region and Europe as well.

6. Finally, the Government of Montenegro does not accept the leadership of Serbia and its political and diplomatic representatives and services, misusing the administration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to be the representatives of the policy and interest of Montenegro. They cannot do this on behalf of the state of Montenegro in future but only on behalf of the state of Serbia, inasmuch as its citizens and democratically elected bodies accept it. Montenegro will independently express, represent and protect its policy and its interest and inform other countries and international organizations thereon, either directly or through its authorized representatives.